APPENDIX D-3

Project Newsletters

PROJECT NEWS

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - CANAL ROAD ENTRANCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Number 1 **February 1994**

Purpose of the Newsletter

The purpose of this newsletter is to continue to keep the public appraised of the status of the Georgetown University Entrance Road Project. This first issue will briefly discuss the history of the project, the agencies involved, and the current status of the project.

Early Project History

In 1982, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (now called the Federal Transit Administration) issued a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on an Environmental Assessment for construction of an at-grade signalized intersection at the Georgetown University Canal Road Entrance. However, the project was never constructed.

Project History Subsequent to the 1987 Federal Aid Highway Act Authorization

Because the Georgetown University Canal Road Entrance still created a safety and transportation problem, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1987 authorized a demonstration project for improving vehicle access to Canal Road from Georgetown University. Also in 1987, $6.6 million was allocated for the design and construction of the project. In 1991, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed outlining the responsibilities of all involved parties.

Roles of Each Agency Involved

The responsibilities of the cooperating agencies for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were outlined in the 1991 MOA.

- *The Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will prepare the EIS, the design plans, and administer the construction of the project.*

- *The District of Columbia Division of the FHWA will provide overall coordination of the project, authorize funding for all phases of the work, and approve the EIS.*

- *The District of Columbia, through the Department of Public Works, will participate in all phases of development of the project, accept maintenance of the facility once completed, and acquire the rights for right-of-way.*

- *The National Park Service (NPS) will provide an access easement to the District of Columbia across the NPS land along the north side of Canal Road that is necessary for the construction of the project. In return, Georgetown University will give the NPS a scenic easement over Georgetown University land that is equal in value to the access easement across NPS land.*

In addition, the MOA includes the understanding that Georgetown University will provide a scenic easement of 2.5 acres of land to the NPS. This easement constitutes the local matching of Federal funds and will protect the views from the C&O Canal and from Glover Archbold Park.

Recent History and Project Status

On October 29, 1992, a public notice in the Federal Register was published stating that an EIS was going to be prepared. The purpose of an EIS is to analyze the environmental impacts of different construction alternatives compared with the no-action alternative. The Draft EIS is currently being prepared and will be available for distribution in early 1994 for public review.

An open house/informational meeting was held on February 11, 1993, to explain the proposed alternatives to interested parties and to offer an opportunity for the public to ask questions and submit written comments. In addition, meetings have been held with the C&O Canal Advisory Commission, the Palisades Citizens Association, and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions to brief these groups about the project.

Comments concerning the project were collected by the FHWA District of Columbia Division at the February 11, 1993, meeting. Comments were also sent directly to the FHWA after the meeting.

PROJECT NEWS

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - CANAL ROAD ENTRANCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Number 1 (cont.) **February 1994**

Public Comments

Comments from local citizens and from local citizen associations and commissions were generally concerned about the impacts the project would have on the Georgetown area. Of particular concern is the project's potential impact on traffic operations. Almost everyone commented that it is important for the EIS to accurately and completely present all impacts associated with each alternative. This concern is also shared by the agencies involved and every effort will be made to ensure that the final EIS provides a comprehensive and accurate analysis of each alternative.

Selection of Alternatives for Inclusion in the Draft EIS

The Draft EIS will discuss the purpose and the need for the project and identify the alternatives selected for consideration from the nine different preliminary design and the no-action alternatives.

These alternatives were selected for consideration based on cost, constructability, aesthetic impacts, traffic service, along with comments and input from the February 11, 1993, public meeting and the neighborhood meetings. The environmental effects and consequences of each selected alternative will be discussed and compared in the Draft EIS.

The selected alternatives are:

No Action - (Alternative 1 at the Public Information Meeting). This alternative would maintain the existing entrance to Georgetown University from Canal Road. This alternative will be used as a basis for assessing and comparing the impacts of the other alternatives.

At-Grade Intersection - (Alternative 2). This alternative proposes an at-grade intersection controlled by a traffic signal. The entrance would be reconstructed and turning movements in all directions would be allowed.

Westbound Canal Road Elevated - (Alternative 3B). This alternative consists of a grade separated interchange. Westbound Canal Road is elevated to eliminate the conflict with traffic entering and exiting Georgetown University. Through traffic in both directions on Canal Road would not have to stop and turning movements in all directions would be allowed.

Canal Road Underpass - (Similar to Alternative 3G). This is also a grade separated interchange, however, both directions of Canal Road are lowered under a new bridge to connect eastbound Canal Road and the Georgetown University entrance. This will allow through traffic in both directions on Canal Road to pass by the entrance without stopping and also provide turning movements in all directions.

What's next?

The Draft EIS is scheduled to be completed for distribution in April 1994. At that time, a public hearing will be scheduled. Public hearings provide citizens and interested agencies an opportunity to comment on and ask questions about the Draft EIS.

In addition, we will continue to coordinate with the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts to solicit their input and approval for the project.

Comments

Questions and comments on the project or newsletter are welcome at any time.

Please send your comments to:

Mr. Arthur Hill
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Union Center Plaza
Suite 750
820 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

or you may contact:

Mr. Jerry Yakowenko
Federal Highway Administration
at (202) 523-0153.

NEWSLETTER

Number 2 **Georgetown University - Canal Road Entrance Project** August 1994

INTRODUCTION

This is the second in a series of three newsletters regarding proposed changes to the Georgetown University Canal Road Entrance. The purpose of these newsletters is to keep the public informed of the progress of the project and to address related issues. The first newsletter discussed the project's purpose, history, the alternatives being considered, and the Federal approval process. As noted in the first newsletter, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had originally scheduled the issuance of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Canal Road project for April of 1994. However, the issuance of the DEIS has been postponed until late 1994 to allow additional time for discussion of important issues and increased public involvement.

Based on previous public and agency comments, the principal issues are traffic and visual impacts. To promote public discussion and involvement on these issues, the FHWA has scheduled public meetings for September 14th and October 12th at the Library at Mount Vernon College between 6:00-9:30 pm. The first meeting will focus on traffic issues and the second on visual, aesthetic, and cultural resource issues. Each meeting will be preceded by a newsletter. This edition of the newsletter will concentrate on traffic and transportation issues. A future newsletter will address the visual, aesthetic, and cultural issues.

A REMINDER: WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The project proposes modifying the existing entrance to Georgetown University at Canal Road. The modifications would allow access to and from the main academic campus for eastbound traffic. The Canal Road entrance currently allows access and egress only for westbound traffic. As a result, much of the University-related traffic to or from Virginia or D.C. to the main academic campus uses residential streets east of the University. By modifying the Canal Road entrance to allow access by eastbound traffic, vehicles currently using residential streets east of the University would be redirected to Canal Road.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED?

Nine conceptual alternatives were developed and presented at a public meeting on February 11, 1993, at Mount Vernon College. After considering public comments and a technical evaluation of the nine alternatives, four were selected for in-depth analysis. These four include the No-Action Alternative and three Build Alternatives. For each of the three Build Alternatives, the proposed entrance modifications would provide both ingress and egress for eastbound and westbound traffic. If a new entrance is constructed, based on the currently approved University Master Plan it is anticipated that the Prospect Street entrance would be closed to all traffic except emergency and service vehicles. The following is a brief description of the four alternatives.

Alternative 1, No-Action, would maintain the existing entrances at both the Canal Road and Prospect Streets entrances as they are.

Alternative 2, At-Grade Intersection, would consist of a signalized, at-grade intersection. The entrance would be reconstructed. Turning movements in all directions would be allowed.

Alternative 3B, Westbound Canal Road Elevated, an interchange would elevate the westbound lanes of Canal Road. Through traffic in both directions would not have to stop. Turning movements in all directions would be allowed.

Alternative 3H, Canal Road Underpass, both lanes of Canal Road would be lowered under a bridge to connect eastbound Canal Road with Georgetown University. As with Alternative 3B, through traffic in both directions would not have to stop. Turning movements in all directions would be allowed.

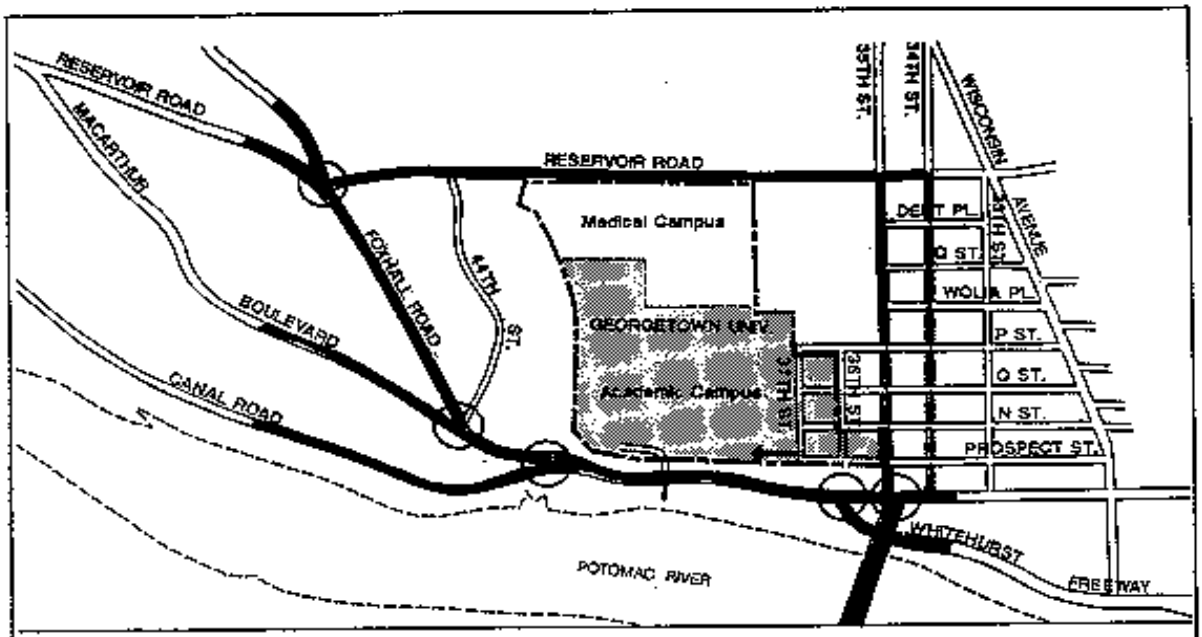

FIGURE 1
Traffic Study Area

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL TRAFFIC IMPACTS OF BUILDING A NEW ENTRANCE?

Traffic impacts were evaluated for the streets and intersection shown in **Figure 1.** The streets include Foxhall Road, MacArthur Boulevard, Reservoir Road, Canal Road, Prospect Street, and local Georgetown streets east of Wisconsin Avenue. The streets and intersections were selected based on previous studies and on an assessment of the potential areas of impact. Impacts were determined by analyzing and comparing three sets of traffic data:

- Existing traffic conditions in January 1993.
- Projected traffic in the year 2016 if the proposed entrance improvement is not built (the No Action Alternative).
- Projected traffic conditions in 2016 if any of the three Build Alternatives are implemented.

Using this traffic data, four standard analytical procedures were used to determine the changes in:

- Traffic patterns to Georgetown University,
- Peak AM and PM hour traffic volumes on selected streets,
- Level of Service (LOS), a technical measure of traffic congestion which assigns ranks from LOS A (uninterrupted traffic flow) to LOS F (severe congestion), and,
- Vehicle travel times.

The results of this analysis for the first two factors--travel patterns and peak-hour traffic volumes-- are the basis of this newsletter to illustrate the main differences between the No Action Alternative and the three Build Alternatives. Information on the results of the analysis of LOS and vehicle travel times are included in a *Transportation Technical Report* dated November 1993. This report, which focuses on traffic issues, will be available at the meeting focusing on traffic issues scheduled for September 12th. Also available will be a summary document, *The Traffic Summary Report.* Advance copies of either reports

are available before the meeting from the FHWA office listed on the last page of this newsletter.

HOW WOULD THE NEW ENTRANCE AFFECT TRAVEL PATTERNS TO AND FROM THE UNIVERSITY?

The inability to make left turns at the Canal Road entrance to Georgetown University affects traffic patterns throughout the Georgetown area. Some travelers must use routes other than the most direct or efficient to and from the campus.

Today all vehicles approaching the academic campus from the west and northwest must use Reservoir Road and local streets east of the campus to reach either the Prospect Street or the Canal Road entrance. Vehicles departing the campus to points east or across Key Bridge must likewise use local Georgetown streets. Over 34% of the departing traffic uses Key Bridge. This departing traffic currently passes through Georgetown streets to reach M Street and then the Key Bridge.

Travel patterns to and from the University--as measured by percent of vehicles using different routes—would remain the same with the No Action Alternative as today. These percentages are shown in Figures 2 and 3 for the No Action Alternative. They show that currently, of the traffic going to the University, 27.8% uses Wisconsin Avenue and Georgetown streets, and that 26.6% of the traffic leaving the University use these same routes.

All three Build Alternatives would produce changes in travel routes used to get to and from the University. The resulting changes in travel routes are the same for all three Build Alternatives and are also shown in Figures 2 and 3. For both arrivals and departures, the percentages using Wisconsin Avenue and Georgetown Streets would decrease-- to 13.8% for arrivals and to 14.7% for departures. Key Bridge would still be the main arrival (30.1%) and departure (34.1%) route. For arrivals and departure, increases would occur on Canal Road and Foxhall Road. For arrivals, 14.9% would use Canal Road and 16.4% Foxhall Road. For departures, 15.5% would use Canal Road and 16.9% would use Foxhall Road. Overall, these changes indicate a shift of University traffic from the local streets to the principal arterials. But as is mentioned in the next section, these changes would have no measureable impact to operations on Foxhall Road to the north or Canal Road to the west.

HOW WOULD THE PROJECT AFFECT PEAK-HOUR TRAFFIC ON CANAL ROAD AND OTHER LOCAL STREETS?

Existing and projected year 2016 peak-hour traffic volumes for the No Action and Build Alternatives are

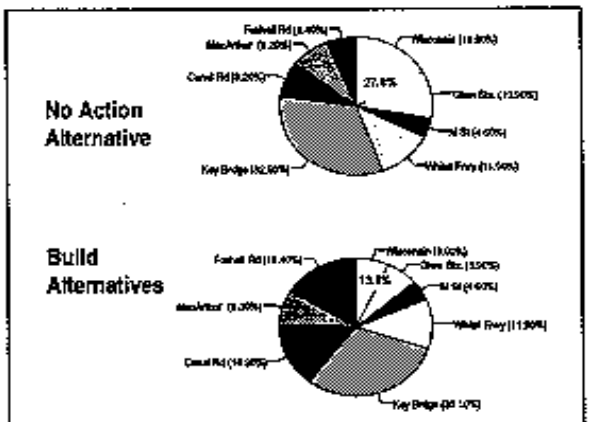

Figure 2 **Arrival by Route**

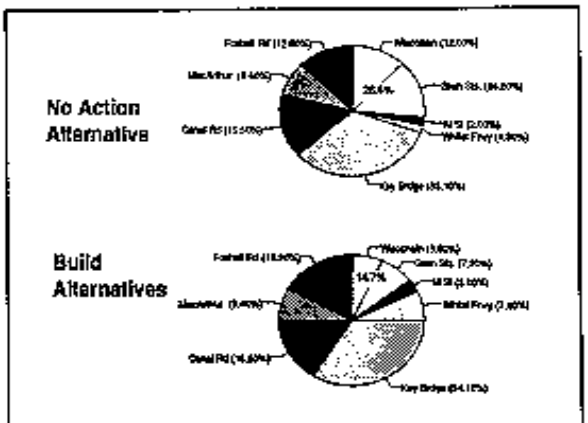

Figure 3 **Departures by Route**

shown in Figure 4. Existing peak-hour traffic volumes are based on actual vehicle traffic volumes obtained as part of the analysis for preparation of the DEIS. It was determined that Georgetown's main academic campus generates about 550 AM peak-hour and 660 PM peak-hour trips each day.

In the future, as shown in Figure 4, peak-hour traffic is expected to grow on the streets surrounding the campus due to regional growth, whether or not Canal Road entrance improvements are constructed. This "background traffic growth" was estimated based on past trends and estimates of future traffic growth from the Metropolitan Council of Governments and the District of Columbia. Thus, even with the No Action Alternative, traffic is projected to grow on local streets by about 5 percent over the next 20 years.

The Build Alternatives for the entrance would not increase the number of University main academic campus vehicle trips during the peak-hour. Rather, the improvements would permit all vehicle turning movements at the Canal Road entrance. The resulting traffic patterns to and from the University noted above would change the peak-hour traffic volumes on the surrounding streets.

Changes in Peak-hour Traffic Volumes on Canal Road with Build Alternatives

	AM (Vehicles/Hour)	PM (Vehicles/Hour)
Eastbound Canal Road		
- East of Entrance	+ 47	+340
- West of Entrance	+201	+131
Westbound Canal Road		
- East of Entrance	- 27	+ 37
- West of Entrance	+ 58	+119

With the construction of the new entrance and the anticipated closing of the Prospect Street entrance, peak-hour traffic volumes would decrease on residential streets east of the campus. On the other hand, traffic volume on some of the principal streets around the University would increase. For example, on Canal Road between Foxhall Road and Key Bridge, the projected peak hour changes in traffic are shown in the table above. The largest increases occur in the eastbound direction. These increases occur west of the new entrance in the AM peak hour and east of the new entrance in the PM peak hour.

The impact of these changes in traffic volumes on the street operations was evaluated using the Level of Service and travel time factors noted earlier. These analyses indicated different impacts for Alternative 2, the At-Grade Intersection, as compared to the two Interchange Alternatives 3B and 3H. For the streets and intersections other than Canal Road, the analyses could not identify any differences in roadway operations among the three alternatives. However, the operation of Canal Road would be noticeably better with either of the two Interchanges than with the At-Grade Intersection.

WHAT IS THE AFFECT OF UNIVERSITY-GENERATED TRAFFIC IN THE FUTURE?

The estimate of future vehicle trips into and out of the campus is affected by three primary factors--people, buildings, and parking. First, Georgetown University currently projects between 5-10% growth in faculty, staff, and student enrollment. Second, the 2.6 million square foot (252,400 square. meters) increase in building area projected by the Georgetown University 1990 Campus Plan, which was developed with public participation and review, is for support and replacement space. The Plan proposes building a new and larger library; a replacement gymnasium; a parking structure to consolidate campus parking; additional student dormitories to reduce student vehicle trips to campus; and educational and research facilities to expand on and replace existing facilities. Third, the number of parking spaces on the campus is restricted and will not be increased. Based on these three factors, the number of vehicle trips into and out of the academic campus is estimated to remain essentially unchanged.

In addition, the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment in approving the 1990 Campus Plan, agreed with the Department of Public Works recommendation, among others, that the transportation elements of the Plan would generally have positive impacts on the surrounding neighborhood streets. These elements included proposed improvements to the Canal Road

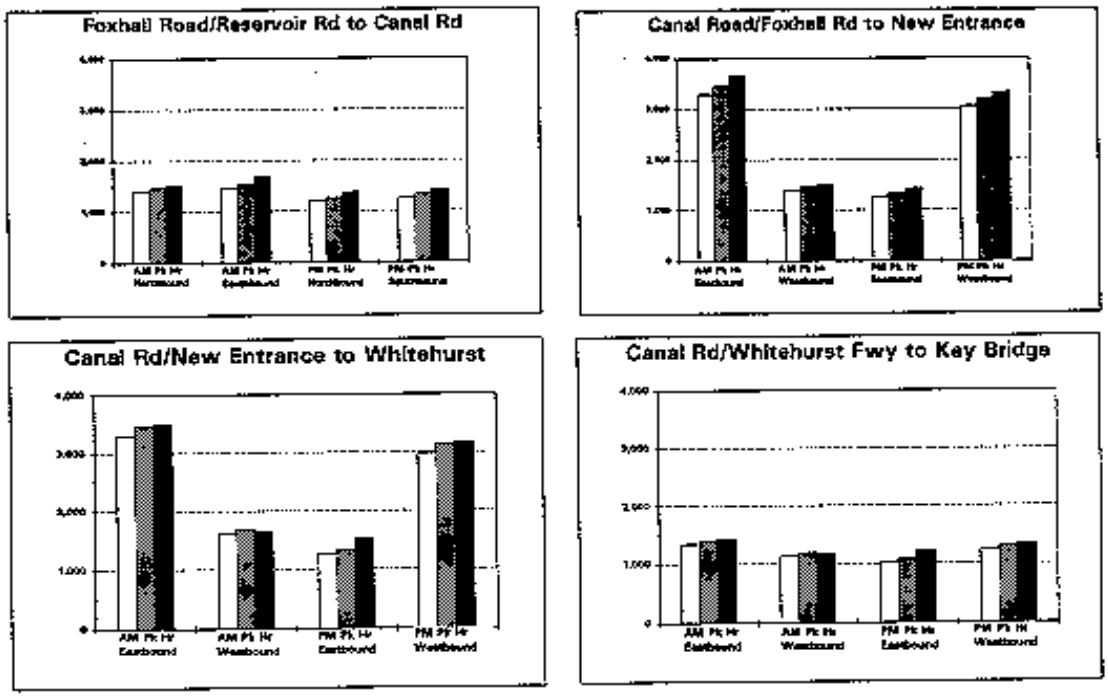

Figure 4 **Peak Hour Traffic Volumes**

entrance and the closing of the Prospect Street entrance. They did note however, that there may be some minimal negative impacts on traffic flow during peak periods but determined that these were outweighed by the benefits the improved Canal Road entrance would achieve.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

You may obtain a copy of either the full "Transportation Technical Report" or the "Traffic Summary Report" which summarizes its overall findings from:

Federal Highway Administration
Eastern Federal Lands Highways Division
21400 Ridgetop Circle
Sterling, VA 20166-6511
Tel. (703) 285-0085; Fax. (703) 285-0011.

Please send your comments on the project or the newsletter to:

Mr. Arthur Hill
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration Union Center Plaza - Suite 750
820 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

or:

Mr. Gerald Yakowenko
Federal Highway Administration
(202) 523-0163

NEWSLETTER

Number 3 **Georgetown University - Canal Road Entrance Project** Sept. 1994

INTRODUCTION

This is the third in a series of newsletters regarding proposed changes to the Georgetown University Canal Road Entrance. The purpose of the newsletters is to keep the public informed of the progress of the project as well as related issues. This edition of the newsletter will concentrate on the archeological and aesthetic issues of the project. As noted in the second newsletter, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had originally scheduled the issuance of its Canal Road project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for April of 1994. However, the issuance of the DEIS has been postponed until late 1994 to allow additional time for public involvement in the discussion of important issues. In order to promote this involvement, the FHWA has scheduled a public meeting on October 12 at the Library of Mount Vernon College between 6:00pm and 8:30 pm.

A REMINDER: WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The project proposes modifying the existing entrance to Georgetown University at Canal Road. The modifications would allow access to and from the Main Academic Campus for eastbound traffic. The Canal Road entrance currently allows access and egress only for westbound traffic. As a result, much of the University-related traffic to or from Virginia or D.C. to the Main Academic Campus uses residential streets east of the University. By modifying the Canal Road entrance to allow access by eastbound traffic to and from Virginia and D.C., vehicles currently using residential streets east of the University would be redirected to Canal Road. See **Figure 1** for project location.

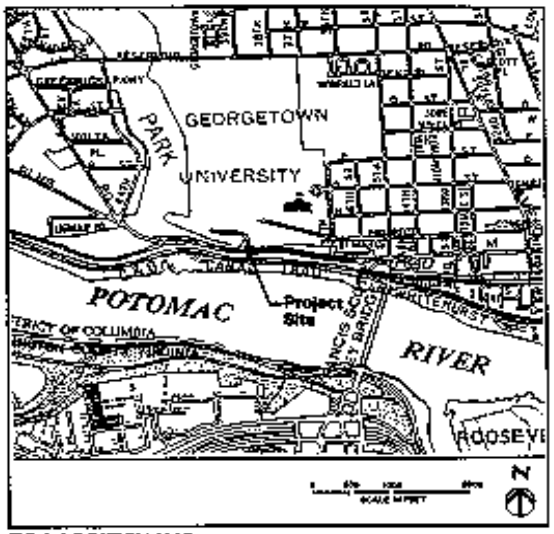

FIG 1: LOCATION MAP

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED?

Nine conceptual alternatives were developed and presented at a public meeting on February 11, 1993, at Mount Vernon College. After considering public comments and a technical evaluation of the nine alternatives, four were selected for indepth analysis. These four included the No-Action Alternative and three Build Alternatives. For each of the three Build Alternatives, the proposed entrance modifications would provide both ingress and egress for eastbound and westbound traffic. If a new entrance is constructed, it is anticipated that the Prospect Street entrance would be closed to all traffic except emergency and service vehicles. The alternatives are: ***Alternatives 1***, No-Action; ***Alternative 2***, At-Grade Intersection; ***Alternative 3B***, Westbound Canal Road Elevated; and ***Alternative 3H***, Canal Road Underpass.

DOES THE PROJECT SITE HAVE ANY HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE?

The project site is associated with four historic resources which are on the National Register of Historic Places as Category II landmarks: 1) Georgetown Historic District, 2) the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Historical Park, 3) the C&O Canal (note that the canal and park are listed separately in the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites), and 4) George Washington Memorial Parkway.

1) Georgetown Historic District
The project area is within the Georgetown Historic District. The Georgetown Historic District is generally bounded by Reservoir Road and Whitehaven Street on the north, Rock Creek Park on the east, the Potomac River on the south, and Glover-Archbold Parkway on the west. There are approximately 4000 structures within the district, built between 1765 and 1940. See **Figure 2.**

2) The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
The project area is adjacent to the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Designated as a National Historical Park in January 1971, the park includes the canal and towpath as well as adjacent land stretching 184 miles between Georgetown and Cumberland, Maryland. See **Figure 2.**

3) Chesapeake and Ohio Canal
The project area is adjacent to the C&O Canal which runs along the Potomac River west from Rock Creek. Construction of the canal began in 1828 and this section was completed by 1831. The C&O Canal played an important role in the commercial development of Georgetown. In addition to transporting coal, grain, and other products, the canal was a source of water power for the mills and businesses. The canal is located within the Georgetown Historic District, the C&O Canal Historic District, and the Potomac Gorge (listed on the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites). Land ownership is with the United States. The C&O Canal represents one of the finest examples of America's canal building era in the first half of the nineteenth century.

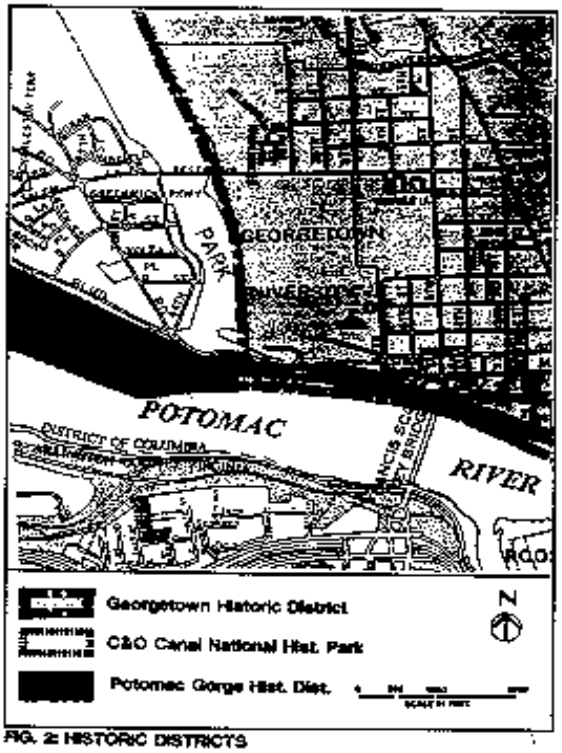

FIG. 2: HISTORIC DISTRICTS

4) George Washington Memorial Parkway
According to the National Park Service, the project area is partially within the D.C./Maryland side of George Washington Memorial Parkway which runs along both sides of the Potomac River. Canal Road was originally called Falls Street or Falls Road because it provides access west to Little Falls and Great Falls. To the east of the project area, it was known as Bridge Street because it led to the main bridge across Rock Creek to Washington City.

5) Archeology
Project research has identified one archeological area/site within the project area. The archeological reconnaissance survey revealed portions of foundations possibly related to these nineteenth century foundations. Title research indicates that this land

was part of the Western Addition to Georgetown surveyed in 1801. The land was owned in the nineteenth century by William J. Fowler (the western part) and M.E. Kleindenst (the eastern part). The structures may have been a dwelling and associated outbuildings such as a privy and stables; or the main structure may have been a commercial structure associated with the C&O Canal and the canal front commerce. Several structures along the north side of Canal Road on the east side of the project area were acquired by the National Park Service and demolished.

While the presumption is made that this area is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places based on the archaeological potential of the site, a formal determination of eligibility has not been made at this time. The site could yield information about the use of land adjacent to the C&O Canal in the nineteenth century and provide answers to questions about the nature of canal front and the ways of life and/or commerce in the 19th century. The archeological remains could potentially reveal significant information on the early historic occupation of Georgetown as well as evidence of prehistoric use of the project area.

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS TO THE HISTORIC RESOURCES?

The present alignment of Canal Road is within several feet of the canal wall. Any design which takes the road closer to the canal wall or cuts into the ground below the present Canal Road may impact the canal wall. Associated features which demonstrate historic construction techniques, and artifacts associated with the construction and maintenance of the canal walls would also be affected.

The project may have visual impact to the C&O Canal. The canal is utilized for living history programs such as trips on a reconstructed canal barge. Additionally, the towpath, which is located on the lower or Potomac River side of the canal, is used extensively for hiking and biking. An elevated roadway on Canal Road may be visible from the canal and towpath and intrude on the historic setting.

All Build alternatives would impact the George Washington Memorial Parkway/Canal Road. Design options with depressed and elevated roadways will change the character of the roadway. The original Falls Road once ran along this general alignment, and there may be remnants of this roadway and the bridge over the unnamed stream alongside Fowler's Road. However, further research and testing may demonstrate that the area had already been extensively disturbed in the past, and archaeological evidence of the original roadway and bridge may no longer exist.

It should be noted that any potential impact to any of the historic resources will require coordination with the U.S. National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). NCPC was created by law in 1924, and is the central planning agency for the federal government in Washington. It is charged with protecting the interests of the federal government and safeguarding important historical and natural features in the nation's capital. CFA was created by Congressional Act in 1910. It is a seven-member, presidentially-appointed panel whose primary role is to review the architectural aspects of buildings, parks, monuments, and memorials proposed by the federal or DC governments in Washington. In addition, CFA advises the federal and DC government on historic preservation matters. This project will be submitted to both NCPC and CFA for review and comments.

Since the project site is located in the District of Columbia, D.C.'s State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will also be involved in reviewing the impacts and coordinating the mitigations.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED MITIGATIONS FOR IMPACTS TO HISTORIC RESOURCES?

If the archaeological resources are determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, a plan of mitigation will be developed. Potentially, this would involve more extensive excavation of the site to recover data from the archaeological deposits, and refinement of the design configuration to minimize disturbance to the site.

WILL THERE BE ANY VISUAL IMPACT TO THE PROJECT AREA?

For persons traveling in vehicles, the portion of Canal Road between the Whitehurst Freeway and Foxhall Road offers a scenic passage. Steep bluffs and heavy woodlands are close to the northern side of the road, with more open views and glimpses of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River to the south. At the University entrance road the woodlands on the north side of the road open up and the slopes are less severe and maintained as lawn. This presents a sharp contrast to the typical steep bluffs and heavy woodland cover.

Actions that directly remove vegetation along the bluffs or physically modify the bluffs by excavation or construction of walls would impact the visual context of the area. The impacts would generally increase as greater areas are altered. The discussion of the visual impacts of the project can be divided into two parts--the view from the road and the view of the road.

View from the Road

Alternative 1, the No-Build Alternative, would not cause any change in the existing visual experience from Canal Road. **Figure 3** shows three cross sections of Canal Road--one at the existing entrance and one each to the east and west.

Alternative 2, the at-grade intersection, would have the least visual impact of the Build Alternatives for drivers along Canal Road. The views from the road of the C&O Canal Road, the Potomac River, and Virginia would remain unchanged.

The primary change would occur in the view of the Palisades caused by the widening of Canal Road for a length of about 230 meters (750 feet) along the north side of the roadway. This widening would take place in the existing grassy berm east of the present entrance road and in the wooded area to the east of it. A retaining wall about 35 meters (115 feet) long would be built in the area east of the existing entrance where the bluff comes closest to Canal Road.

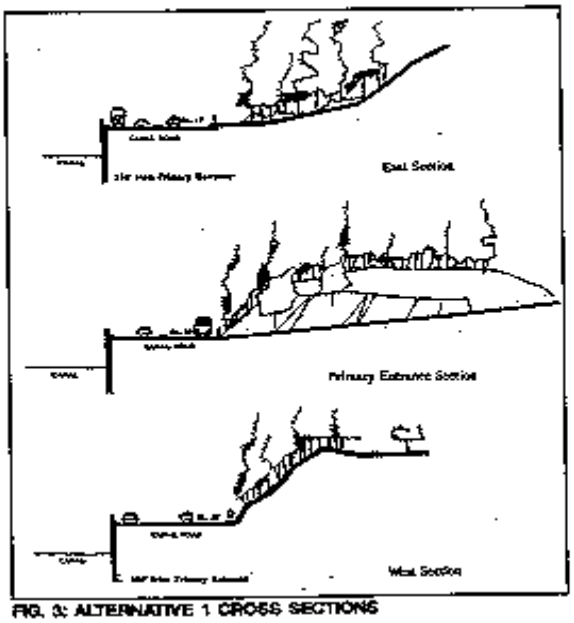

FIG. 3: ALTERNATIVE 1 CROSS SECTIONS

Alternative 3B, with the westbound lanes elevated, would have different changes for the eastbound and the westbound drivers. This alternative would widen the Canal Road right of way for a length of about 460 meters (1,500 feet). A retaining wall would be built on the north side of the right of way to the west of the existing entrance, where excavation of the steep hillside would be required. The westbound lanes of Canal Road would be elevated as much as six meters (20 feet) above the existing grade. From the eastbound lanes of Canal Road, the elevated roadway would replace the view of the Palisades. From eastbound Canal Road, views toward the south over the C&O Canal and the Potomac River would remain unchanged. From the elevated westbound lanes, the view toward the south of the canal and the river would be extended because of the higher elevation. See **Figure 4.**

Alternative 3H would depress both the eastbound and the westbound lanes of Canal Road below the existing grade level. It would require the shifting of the Canal Road right-of-way to the north for about 670 meters (2,200 feet). Views from vehicles traveling in both

directions would be blocked along most of the distance where the roadway would be depressed. The through lanes would be open to the sky, except where they passed under a bridge about nine meters (30 feet) wide carrying the entrance road to the eastbound exit and entrance ramps. See Figure 5.

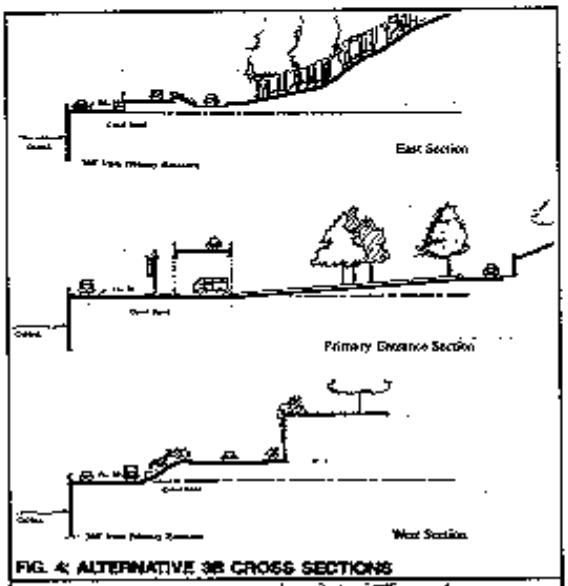

FIG. 4: ALTERNATIVE 3B CROSS SECTIONS

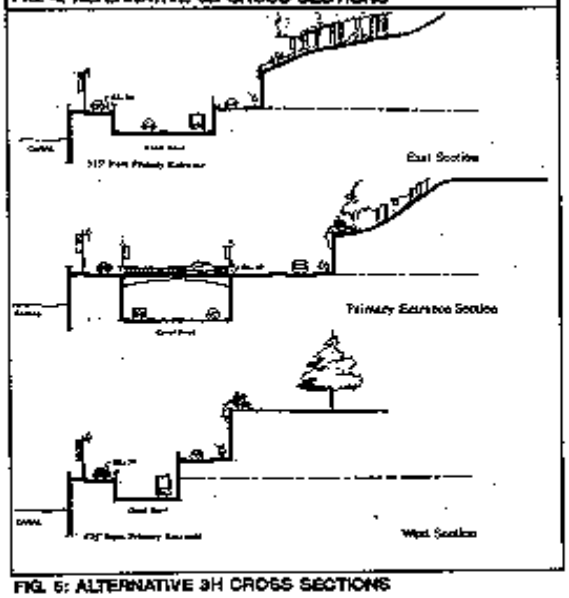

FIG. 5: ALTERNATIVE 3H CROSS SECTIONS

View of the Road

Alternative 1, the No-Build Alternative, would cause no change in the view of the Palisades or of Canal Road.

Alternative 2 would require a retaining wall which would be visible from the C&O Canal towpath. From the Potomac River, Key Bridge and the Virginia side of the river, the view would be partially screened during the spring and summer, and the degree of impact would diminish with distance.

Alternative 3B would produce noticeable changes in view of the road by two elements--the elevated lanes and a retaining wall. The westbound lanes of Canal Road would be elevated for a distance of about 490 meters (1,600 feet). About 180 meters (600 feet) of this elevated roadway would be placed on structure; the rest would be on fill. This would affect the view toward the Palisades from the C&O Canal towpath. The elevated roadway would also be visible from the Potomac River, from the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia and from the Key Bridge and Rosslyn. With the appropriate use of materials and landscaping, however, the elevated westbound lanes could have a terraced-like appearance which could blend into the existing hillside.

There would also be about 130 meters (430 feet) of retaining wall west of the entrance on the north side of Canal Road. Its visibility would be lessened during the spring and summer when trees are in leaf but would still be noticeable. During the fall and winter, these changes would be most visible. While the buildings and spires atop the hill attract the eye, the steep Palisades that define the river corridor have an attraction of their own and any alteration of consequence would be noted.

Alternative 3H would have the most visual impact from the C&O Canal, the Potomac River, and Virginia. While this alternative is depressed, major excavation of the hillside and retaining walls would be required. These walls would be visible from the George Washington Parkway, from Rosslyn, and, to a lesser degree due to the oblique angle from the Key

Bridge. Though they would be partially hidden during spring and summer, they would be visible in fall and winter.

These retaining walls would extend both east and west of the existing entrance. The most noticeable element would be the wall required for the westbound exit from the University. The walls and ramps would be higher on the hillside than Alternative 3B and would have a noticeable impact on the slopes and the existing vegetation. The wall would extend some 230 meters (750 feet) to the west of the entrance and would be noticed due to its location, height and length.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED MITIGATIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACTS?

Mitigation for the visual impacts can be achieved in a variety of ways. Two principle options include architectural treatment of the various structures and landscaping.

The opportunity exists to improve the landscaping and plant materials in the area with any of the Build Alternatives. Generally the existing vegetation on the bluffs and between the towpath and the Potomac River is evolutionary. There is a noticeable lack of evergreen materials, which would greatly help where screening of the new retaining walls is desirable.

Some of the observed varieties of trees include black locust, mulberry, box elder, sycamore, oak (few), ash (few), black cherry, osage orange, and tree of heaven (ailanthus). These are not among the best plant materials for urbanized areas. Some have a relatively short life span, while others are quite weak and suspectable to wind damage. Many of these existing trees are most likely in their waning years and some introduction of hardier varieties would seem advisable in order to preserve and extend the present woodland cover. New shrubs and plant materials would also be introduced to screen the new retaining walls.

Architectural treatments offer opportunities to reduce the visual impact of walls and elevated roadway structures through the introduction of appropriate materials, colors, textures, and details. Many of these options can significantly reduce the perceived visual scale and balkiness of the long and high retaining walls.

Specific aesthetic recommendations for the recommended alternative will be developed in cooperation with the Commission of Fine Arts. The following are among the options that would be considered:

- Design the new landscaping to blend with the existing context and use historically native species.
- Introduce new walkway/bikepath with appropriate access.
- Finish the new retaining walls in appropriate color and material with vertical fenestration and the application of climbing and hanging plantings at the bottom and top of the walls. Apply stone facing similar or identical to the facing on the existing retaining walls.
- Apply stone facing on the load-bearing walls and piers for elevated roadway sections which is similar or identical to the existing retaining walls.
- Install traditional railings and light fixtures on elevated sections.
- Introduce new sculpture or other art works to announce the entry to the University.
- Apply stone facing on the walls along the depressed roadway sections.

Landscape treatment for all the alternatives would focus on two primary objectives--(1) selecting and locating materials to most effectively and appropriately enhance the road improvements, and (2) blending effectively the new improvements into the existing landscape context. Materials will be chosen with consideration for survivability and minimum maintenance requirements.

FHWA - Canal Road Entrance Project
at Georgetown University

NEWSLETTER

Number 4 | Federal Highway Administration | March 1995

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth in a series of newsletters regarding the ongoing study by the FHWA on the Georgetown University Canal Road Entrance. The purpose of the newsletters is to keep the public informed of the progress of the project as well as related issues. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared, and will be available for public review and comment.

The purpose of the proposed project is to modify the existing entrance to Georgetown University at Canal Road. The changes would allow traffic to enter and exit the main academic campus in either direction to Canal Road. The current Canal Road entrance only allows in and out for westbound traffic. For this reason, much of the University-related traffic to or from Virginia and D.C. uses residential streets east of the University. By modifying the Canal Road entrance these vehicles could be redirected to Canal Road.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED?

The alternatives are: ***Alternatives 1***, No-Action; ***Alternative 2***, At-Grade Intersection; ***Alternative 3B***, Westbound Canal Road Elevated; and ***Alternative 3H***, Canal Road Underpass.

In addition to the three "build" alternatives which have been discussed in previous newsletters, another alternative was added recently, based on public comments at the public meetings this past Fall. This will be ***Alternative 2A***, an At-Grade Intersection with no left turn onto Canal Road in the morning rush hours from Georgetown University.

PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD

In response to community concerns, the Project Team met with citizens at two public meetings (September 14, and October 12, 1994). As a result, a new alternative is being added to the project. This alternative is a revised version of Alternative 2, an At-Grade Intersection. The new option, ***Alternative 2A***, restricts traffic that exits the campus in the morning hours from turning left onto Canal Road. There is very little traffic that would travel in this direction, since most cars are entering, not leaving, the University in the morning. This restriction would make it possible for the large numbers of morning commuters travelling east on Canal Road toward the District to continue on with no additional delays. In other words, eastbound Canal Road traffic would not be stopped by a traffic light during the a.m. rush hours; only westbound traffic would be stopped periodically, to allow left turns from the new turning lane on eastbound Canal Road into the University.

This new alternative also allows the Prospect Street entrance to remain open, so that these few cars exiting the University can travel east from the campus in the mornings, without interfering with the movements on Canal Road.

A new alternative has been added to the project. Alternative 2A is an at-grade signalized intersection, but with restricted left turns on to Canal Road in the morning rush hour. Prospect Street would remain open.

IMPACTS CONSIDERED...

The requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 are being met for this study. The project is a cooperative effort among the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the District of Columbia. Coordination is ongoing with the State (District) Historic Preservation Officer as well. The Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements will address the impacts identified in the FHWA Federal Technical Advisory, and comply with other appropriate laws and regulations, such as the National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, and Clean Water Act.

Some examples of the issues are air and noise quality impacts. Sensitive receptors (such as schools) have been identified and effects of each alternative will be predicted based on computer models. Over 6,000 artifacts have been documented during an archeological investigation, and a preliminary geotechnical review of the structural integrity of the retaining wall of the historic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal has been performed.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES...

Current activities include revising "background" traffic volumes based upon new projections from the District o Columbia Department of Public Works, and reassigning University-related traffic based upon Alternative 2A. These changes to travel patterns require review of noise and air quality effects. The computer models that help predict these effects are being rerun.

Additionally, as a result of the Public Meetings in the fall, and Project Staff attendance at a Georgetown Community meeting in December 1994, maintenance-of-traffic during construction is being examined for the various "build" alternatives. Impacts and mitigation techniques are also being explored with the National Park Service regarding right-of-way requirements for the alternatives. The results of these analyses will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE?

√ PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD
√Sept., √Oct. 1994

√ ADDITIONAL ANALYSES
√Traffic, Air, Noise and √ Utilities
(Underway)

☐ **DOCUMENT PREPARATION**
Technical Reports, 4 (f), and Draft EIS
(Underway)

☐ **DRAFT EIS**
Est. available for Review June '95

☞ **Review and Comment Period**
Summer 1995
(Thru 45 days after release of DEIS)

☞ **PUBLIC HEARING**
Est. July '95
(30 days after release of DEIS)

FINAL EIS
Est. release – Nov. '95

RECORD OF DECISION
Est. – Dec. '95
(30 days after release of FEIS)

COMMENTS

Questions and comments on the project or newsletter are welcome at any time.

Please send your comments to :

Mr. Arthur Hill
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Union Center Plaza
820 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

or you may contact:

Mr. Jerry Yakowenko
Federal Highway Administration
at (202) 523-0163

All comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement from the public hearing and during the public and agency review and comment period will be considered as part of the process. No decision on a Preferred Alternative will be made until this review is completed. It is important to explore and evaluate possible additional alternatives and/or mitigation opportunities. The Final Environmental Impact Statement would then be prepared. The FEIS would be followed by the Record of Decision.

FHWA - Canal Road Entrance Project
at Georgetown University

NEWSLETTER

Number 5 | Federal Highway Administration | September 1995

DRAFT EIS

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is available. The DEIS was approved for distribution in late July, 1995 and has been distributed to agencies and individuals on the Project Mailing List.

Comments on the document are requested from all interested parties. The comment period is through September 30, 1995.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, September 19, 1995. From 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the hearing will be at the Eckles Memorial Library, located in Mount Vernon College.

OPEN FORUM
on the Canal Road Entrance project

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
What:
(1) Learn about the project;
(2) Leave written or oral comments.

The format for the public hearing will be two-fold. From 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., in an informal setting, display boards and project materials will be available for review. Project Team members will be available to answer your questions.

This initial portion of the hearing allows an opportunity to exchange comments and questions, explain the study process, and discuss technical issues. A court reporter will be available to accept comments directly from individuals during this time.

The second part of the hearing will begin after a short break. During the break, the room will be rearranged to a more formal auditorium-style seating. At approximately 7:15 p.m., oral comments can be made publicly as part of formal testimony. Elected officials, community leaders and the public will be asked for any oral statements they have on the project. A court reporter will record all testimony and a transcript will be prepared.

FORMAL ORAL TESTIMONY
FROM YOU.....
7:15 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.
What:
(1) Voice your comments
(2) Leave written comments

Each speaker will have three minutes to present testimony. Due to time constraints, questions can not be answered during this portion of the public hearing.

Comment forms will also be available at the hearing, so that written comments can be made. The forms may be left at the public hearing; the forms or other written comments may also be received until September 30, 1995 at the following address:

Mr. Arthur Hill, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Union Center Plaza
Suite 750
820 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Fax: (202) 523-0181

DIRECTIONS TO HEARING

The main entrance to Mount Vernon College is on W Street between Foxhall Road and 46th Street. After entering the main entrance, take the first left. Eckles Memorial Library is the fifth building on the left.

IMPACTS SUMMARY

There are several alternatives under consideration in the DEIS. They are:

- *Alternative 1* - No Build
- *Alternative 2* -At-Grade Intersection with Prospect Street closed
- *Alternative 2A* -At-Grade Intersection with Prospect Street Entrance Open
- *Alternative 3B* -Westbound Canal Road Elevated
- *Alternative 3H* -Canal Road Underpass

Alternative 2A was added as a result of public and community meetings in the Fall 1994. It maintains the entrance/exit at Prospect Street and restricts left turns during the morning peak hours from the Canal Road entrance.

While in the process of evaluating traffic impacts related to Alternative 2A, the "background" traffic for all alternatives was changed due to revisions in future year projections by the District of Columbia Department of Public Works. This change results in an increase of over 18%, in "background" traffic by the design year 2016. Traffic volumes and related analyses of air and noise models were adjusted according to this revision.

The DEIS *Summary* and *Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences* note the different factors and impacts among the alternatives.

REMEMBER

You can submit comments on the DEIS. Comments should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the DEIS, the merit of the alternatives, the potential project impacts, or may recommend other alternatives or mitigation improvements, or all the above. Comments can be provided in any of the following three ways:

1. Oral statements during the open forum and formal portions of the public hearing. A speakers' sign-up list will be located at the greeting table.

2. Written comment forms to be deposited in a designated box at the public hearing.

3. Written comment forms or other letters to be submitted by mail no later than September 30, 1995, and mailed to the above address.

WHAT'S NEXT

Following careful review of public and agency comments, a preferred alternative will be identified. A Final EIS will then be prepared and distributed. The FEIS will include all substantive comments and responses.

After this distribution, the FHWA will prepare a concise public Record of Decision (ROD) on the alternative chosen from the Final EIS for implementation.

MORE INFO

For additional information, please contact either Mr. Gerald Yakowenko, FHWA, at (202) 523-0163 or Ms. Carol Jacoby, FHWA, at (703) 285-0082.

FHWA - Canal Road Entrance Project
at Georgetown University

NEWSLETTER

Number 6 | Federal Highway Administration | August 1996

PROJECT STATUS

Since the Public Hearing in September, 1995, there have been several agency meetings and considerable work performed on analyzing suggested potential mitigation alternatives.

The principal area of focus has been to evaluate traffic and engineering issues and impacts related to several specific recommendations by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The NCPC will be formally considering the results; it is anticipated that this project will be on their ***September 5, 1996*** agenda.

The NCPC has been asked to concur in FHWA's decision that a supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required and that completion of the Final EIS can begin.

MITIGATION ALTERNATIVES

Three alternatives were proposed by the NCPC. These have been studied for traffic and engineering implications and a cursory analysis of environmental impacts. Results indicate that all three alternatives have equal or greater environmental impacts without providing any additional traffic benefits than any of the alternatives presented in the draft EIS.

- **NCPC Alternative 1** - *Proposes to shift the entrance to the Georgetown University approximately 250 feet east.*
- **NCPC Alternative 2** - *Proposes a traffic circle at Foxhall and Canal Road intersection.*
- **NCPC Alternative 3** - *Proposes a parallel entrance road to intersect at Foxhall and Canal Road.* (This alternative was first proposed by the D.C. Department of Public Works.)

ANALYSIS PERFORMED

For **NCPC Alternative 1**, Prospect Street would be closed to all but emergency vehicles due to topography implications. In addition, there would be more impacts to the Palisades due to construction of higher retaining walls along the entrance road. A construction easement would be required from the adjacent private property (Lot 822). Construction cost is $1.8 million.

For **NCPC Alternative 2**, the traffic circle would require three lanes approaching on Canal Road and Foxhall Road, and would require circle diameter of 200 feet. This traffic circle alternative requires almost 7 acres of parkland from the Glover Archbold Park. Traffic level-of-service is not as good as with a signalized intersection. This alternative also does not satisfy the purpose and need for the project, as eastbound traffic on Canal Road cannot access the Canal Road entrance to the University. Construction cost is $3.5 million.

For **NCPC Alternative 3,** a retaining wall approximately 1,000 feet long would be required. This wall would eliminate the bluffs between the University entrance and Glover Archbold Park, adjacent to Canal Road. Five acres of the Park would be required. Land from Lot 822 would be required. As with the previous alternative, this alternative also does not satisfy the purpose and need for the project, as eastbound traffic on Canal Road cannot access the Canal Road entrance to the University. Construction cost is $2.5 million.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

In addition to the various Federal, regional and local official agency comments on the DEIS, many citizens offered comments. At the September 19, 1995 public hearing, seventy-five people attended; thirty-three provided oral testimony. Written comments were subsequently received from almost two hundred citizens. Copies of comments and responses will be included in the FEIS.

Public comments included a wide variety of subjects related to the project ranging from social and environmental impacts to procedural issues.

The majority of the people expressed multiple concerns, with specific emphasis on traffic congestion and future development of the Riders' Fund property. Many indicated their preference for one of the project alternatives, notably either Alternatives 2 or 2A. Many supported the No Build.

The following is a list of the main topics that most of the public's comments can be grouped into:

ISSUES

- ***Traffic impacts***
- ***Secondary development***
- ***Georgetown University growth***
- ***Environmental impacts***
  (air quality, noise, and visual resources)
- ***Project alternatives***
- ***Legal procedural process***

The FEIS will address each of these issues and concerns. As mentioned, additional traffic and engineering analysis has already occurred regarding some additionally proposed alternatives.

SECONDARY DEVELOPMENT

Potential development in the immediate project area was a frequent topic of concern at the Public Hearing and in subsequent public and agency comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Specific attention has been placed on the scenic sensitivity of the area. Such concern directly relates to visual impacts to the Palisades, C&O Canal, towpath, Georgetown Historic District, and the Glover Archbold Park.

In addition to direct project impacts, the DEIS addressed the potential for providing access to, and in turn expecting development from, the parcel known as Lot 822, the Riders' Fund property. This potential for indirectly providing development is a concern to many.

The NCPC and the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, have indicated their lack of support for *any* alternative which would allow for the development of the tract. These are among the cooperating agencies for this project.

UPDATE

As recently as May 31, 1996, this property, Lot 822, was transferred by order of the U.S. District Court to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). By late summer, WMATA is to respond to the court with its intended plans for use of the former Riders' Fund/former D.C. Transit property. This decision will be documented in the FEIS.

NEXT STEPS

The Federal Highway Administration is presenting the results of the mitigation alternatives analysis to the cooperating agencies and signatory agencies of the Memorandum of Agreement on this project. It is anticipated that preparation of the FEIS will proceed this autumn.

MILESTONES

◆	Memorandum of Agreement, 1991	
◆	DEIS	signed July 1995
◆	Public Hearing	Sept. 19, 1995
⇒	FEIS	*est. December 1996
⇒	Record of Decision	*est. February 1997
⇒	Design	*est. 1997-8
⇒	Construction	*est. 1998-9

For additional information on this project, please contact:

Mr. Arthur Hill, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Union Center Plaza
Suite 750
820 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002